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## MILITARISM AND PRISONS

“scientific” individuals who stand on the mountain heights aloof, far from the practical affairs of men, and judge human thought, and human passions with the coldbloodedness of a salamander.

ROBERT FERRARI.

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### MILITARISM AND PRISONS.

During the month of July, this summer, while visiting prisons and workhouses in England, France and Germany, I was struck with the large proportion of ex-soldiers (chiefly line and non-commissioned officers) in their staffs. Two things, one a theory, the other a concrete governmental problem, may be held accountable. The theory is that routine and stiff discipline are the bases of sound prison policy; and that only military men have any real comprehension of the meaning of discipline. The governor of the Borstal Institution, for example, told me that practically all his subordinates were ex-soldiers, and frankly expressed his opinion that civilians were no good in penal institutions because they lacked an understanding of what steady, rigorous discipline, obedience, or subordination signify, and hence usually prove themselves quite unable to maintain that order which marks so strongly English penal institutions. I found the same faith in the soldier and his discipline in France and Germany. The governmental problem is the duty, rightfully or wrongfully assumed, of finding suitable employment for ex-soldiers who have enlisted under the voluntary system of recruitment. The Prison Commission at the home office frankly confesses that it is constantly between two fires: on the one side are the reformers who clamor for less military routine or mere mechanical “discipline,” and for more flexibility in the prison administration, with discipline through constructive educational means. On the other, are the ex-soldiers who must be provided with suitable jobs.

In the present crisis the most interesting feature of the prison problem is the disorganization of the penal machinery through calling to the colors “territorials” and other classes of military reserves. By the middle of August, English prisons had lost at least three hundred officers, with the prospect of still further losses. No doubt continental prisons suffered equally, if not more severely. The moral is that whether they want to or not, the prisons must hereafter recruit their staffs more freely from civilian sources. It will be an excellent step in advance if this emergency opens the way to regular training courses for the prison service. The University of London through some of its departments would seem admirably fitted to jump into the breach to this purpose.

We should not be in the least surprised if the European war has

## MOVING PICTURES VS. SALOON

the further effect of stimulating the enlistment of young men from reformatory institutions at an earlier age than is now the custom. This is not a specially inviting method of developing a parole system, but it may have some effect, nevertheless. There seems to be no good reason for crediting the cry that this or that nation is turning its criminals loose upon the other. The military regime is common to most of them, and one may be sure that if a prisoner on the way to early release looks like good *kanonenfutter* he will be strongly urged in the direction of the army.

A. J. Todd.

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## MOVING PICTURES VS. THE SALOON.

A close connection between alcohol and crime is pretty generally recognized. Anything, therefore, that tends to reduce drunkenness is of interest to the criminologist. The moving picture has been charged with strong criminal suggestiveness. But it appears to have also its preventive and prophylactic side. Secretary Cocks of the National Board of Censorship, which passes on practically all the moving picture films that circulate through the United States, says that it has been shown that as the number of "movies" increases in a community, the saloons decrease. This is of course only a tentative conclusion, like so many other correlations in the field of the social sciences. Yet it is borne out by statements made to me in England this summer by public officials and social workers. They insist that bad as the public house still is, drunkenness has fallen off greatly in the last ten years; and they credit the "movie" with a considerable part of this decrease. This would seem to justify the position of those who hold the idea that the saloon is the poor man's club, and that the saloon can only be put permanently out of business by positive "substitutes," and not by negative legislation. We believe that social centers and decent workingmen's hotels provided with such simple recreational devices as the moving picture would go a long way toward solving the problem of providing a social gathering-ground other than the saloon for badly housed families, self-respecting unmarried workingmen, and the so-called "homeless men." They would kill two birds with one stone, by eliminating a causal factor of crime, and by providing a preventive through rational recreation.

A. J. Todd.